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BC-COUP-PROFILE

PARIS, SEPT 21, REUTER--

BOKASSA IS A FERVENT ADMIRER OF NAPOLEON BONAPARTE, WHO WAS A

DICTATOR WHOSE HARSH RULE MINGLED ACHIEVEMENTS WITH

EXTRAVAGANCE WITH SAVAGE KILLINGS, INCLUDING A REPORTED

MASSACRE OF 150 SCHOOLCHILDREN THIS YEAR.

HIS OVERTHROW CAME WITHIN MONTHS OF THE OUSTING OF AFRICAN

RULERS IDI AMIN OF UGANDA AND FRANCISCO MACIAS NGUEMA OF

EQUATORIAL GUINEA, WHO ALSO HEADED OPPRESSIVE ADMINISTRATIONS.

BOKASSA, WHO RULED THE DIAMOND-RICH FORMER FRENCH COLONY FOR

13 YEARS, WAS REGARDED BY HIS MANY CRITICS ABROAD AS BOTH A

COMIC AND DANGEROUS FIGURE. SHORT IN STATURE, HE WORE A

SPECIALLY LENGTHENED TUNIC TO ACCOMMODATE HIS NUMEROUS MEDALS

AND DECORATIONS.

AFTER HE DECLARED THE CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC AN EMPIRE

IN 1976 AND CROWNED HIMSELF EMPEROR BOKASSA I A YEAR LATER, HE

DECREED THAT GOVERNMENT MINISTERS AND DIPLOMATS MUST BOW WHEN

COMING WITHIN SIX FEET (ALMOST TWO METERS) OF HIM.

LAST MONTH A FIVE-NATION OFF CAM COMMISSION FOUND THAT THE

50-YEAR-OLD EMPEROR HAD ORDERED AND ALMOST CERTAINLY TAKEN

PART IN THE MASSACRE OF ABOUT 150 SCHOOLCHILDREN IN JANUARY

AND APRIL OF THIS YEAR.

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BC-COUP-PROFILE 2 PARIS

IN 1974, HIS RULE CAME UNDER SEVERE CRITICISM WHEN HE

ORDERED THAT THIEVES SHOULD HAVE ONE EAR CUT OFF FOR ONE THEFT,

TWO EARS FOR TWO THEFTS, THEIR RIGHT HANDS FOR THREE THEFTS

AND BE EXECUTED FOR FOUR.

THE FIRST WAVE OF THE NEW PUNISHMENTS WAS SAID TO HAVE BEEN

CARRIED OUT UNDER HIS PERSONAL SUPERVISION AND THE VICTIMS

WERE LATER DISPLAYED IN BANGUI'S MAIN SQUARE. PICTURES OF

PRISONERS IN STRIPED PRISON FATIGUES WITH BLOOD POURING DOWN

THEIR FACES APPEARED THROUGHOUT THE WORLD'S PRESS, CREATING A

STORM OF INTERNATIONAL CRITICISM.

IN 1970, HIS SEARCH FOR AN ILLEGITIMATE DAUGHTER BORN IN

VIETNAM, WHERE HE SERVED IN THE FRENCH ARMY, ENDED WITH A

FOREIGN RELATIONS CRISIS AND HIS ADOPTION OF TWO CLAIMANTS FROM

RULERS IDI AMIN OF UGANDA AND FRANCISCO MACIAS NGUEMA OF EQUATORIAL GUINEA, WHO ALSO HEADED OPPRESSIVE ADMINISTRATIONS.

BOKASA, WHO RULED THE DIAMOND-RICH FORMER FRENCH COLONY FOR 13 YEARS, WAS REGARDED BY HIS MANY CRITICS ABROAD AS BOTH A COMIC AND DANGEROUS FIGURE. SHORT IN STATURE, HE WORE A SPECIALLY LENGTHENED TUNIC TO ACCOMMODATE HIS NUMEROUS MEDALS AND DECORATIONS.

AFTER HE DECLARED THE CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC AN EMPIRE IN 1976 AND CROWNED HIMSELF EMPEROR BOKASSA I A YEAR LATER, HE DECREED THAT GOVERNMENT MINISTERS AND DIPLOMATS MUST BOW WHEN COMING WITHIN SIX FEET (ALMOST TWO METERS) OF HIM.

LAST MONTH A FIVE-NATION AFRICAN COMMISSION FOUND THAT THE 58-YEAR-OLD EMPEROR HAD ORDERED, AND ALMOST CERTAINLY TAKEN PART IN, THE MASSACRE OF ABOUT 150 SCHOOLCHILDREN IN JANUARY AND APRIL OF THIS YEAR.

MORE 0628

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BC-COUP-PROFILE 2 PARIS

IN 1971, HIS RULE CAME UNDER SEVERE CRITICISM WHEN HE ORDERED THAT THIEVES SHOULD HAVE ONE EAR CUT OFF FOR ONE THEFT, TWO EARS FOR TWO THEFTS, THEIR RIGHT HANDS FOR THREE THEFTS, AND BE EXECUTED FOR FOUR.

THE FIRST WAVE OF THE NEW PUNISHMENTS WAS SAID TO HAVE BEEN CARRIED OUT UNDER HIS PERSONAL SUPERVISION, AND THE VICTIMS WERE LATER DISPLAYED IN BANGUI'S MAIN SQUARE. PICTURES OF PRISONERS IN STRIPED PRISON FATIGUES WITH BLOOD POURING DOWN THEIR FACES APPEARED THROUGHOUT THE WORLD'S PRESS, CREATING A STORM OF INTERNATIONAL CRITICISM.

IN 1970, HIS SEARCH FOR AN ILLEGITIMATE DAUGHTER BORN IN VIETNAM, WHERE HE SERVED IN THE FRENCH ARMY, ENDED WITH A FOREIGN RELATIONS CRISIS AND HIS ADOPTION OF TWO CLAIMANTS FROM THE SOUTHEAST ASIAN COUNTRY.

HE PUT ONE UNDER HOUSE ARREST AND ACCUSED HER OF ESPIONAGE. HE CHARGED FRANCE, SOUTH VIETNAM AND THE UNITED STATES CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY (CIA) WITH COMPLICITY IN THE AFFAIR.

MORE 0630